



DATE: 01 April 2013

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense  
Office of Rule of Law and Detainee Policy  
Pentagon  
703-695-8404 (UNCLAS)

Facsimile Cover Sheet

TO: Center for Constitutional Rights

FROM: William K. Lietzau, DASD, Rule of Law and Detainee Policy

Contact Number: 703-697-5884

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NOTE: This is in response to the March 14, 2013 letter to Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel regarding legal counsel concerns about a hunger strike at the detention facilities in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Total (Including cover sheet): 2

CLASSIFICATION:  
UNCLASSIFIED



POLICY

## OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

2000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2000

APR 01 2013

Center for Constitutional Rights  
666 Broadway, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10012

Dear Ms. Kebriaei, et al:

Thank you for your recent letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding current conditions in the detention camps at Guantanamo Bay. I have been asked to respond on the Secretary's behalf.

We appreciate your concerns regarding camp conditions, and we share your commitment to the welfare and safety of both the detainees and the guard force. We take the safety and security of those detained at Guantanamo Bay very seriously, and we conduct our detention operations humanely and in accordance with the highest standards. We understand you have also raised these concerns in a meeting with attorneys at the Department of Justice.

Concerning recent complaints apparently communicated to you by detainees alleging mishandling of the Quran during routine searches, there has been no change to our cell or block search procedures and we understand that standard operating procedures governing Quran searches have been strictly followed. Those standard operating procedures were specifically formulated to ensure that the Quran is handled at all times with the utmost respect. As you know, these routine searches are essential to the safety and security of detainees and those tasked with ensuring their safe and humane detention. There have, in the past, been incidents of detainees storing contraband in their Qurans; items found have included improvised weapons, unauthorized food and medicine, and other items which detainees could utilize to harm themselves, guards, medical personnel, translators, instructors, attorneys, or other detainees. Therefore, it is imperative that the JTF conduct security inspections of the Qurans in accordance with applicable standard operating procedures.

We are aware of reports that many detainees are engaged in a hunger strike, and we want to assure you that JTF-GTMO will continue its work to ensure the health and safety of the detainees. It is the policy of the Department of Defense to support the preservation of life by appropriate clinical means, in a humane manner, and in accordance with all applicable laws and policies. The medical staff continuously monitors and provides exemplary medical care to detainees at JTF-GTMO.

Sincerely,

William K. Lietzau  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Rule of Law and Detainee Policy